

REMARKS

Claims 1-4, 6, 9, 10 and 12-14 are presented for consideration, with Claim 1 being independent.

Claim 1 has been amended to further distinguish Applicants' invention from the cited art. In addition, Claims 13 and 14 have been added to provide an additional scope of protection.

The specification has been amended to correspond with the Replacement Sheet of drawings being submitted herewith. In that regard, Applicant is submitting a Submission of Replacement Sheet of Drawings, with Figures 7B and 7D including reference numerals of the recess 108 and projection 109. Approval of the substitute sheet of drawings is respectfully requested.

The drawings were objected to for allegedly failing to show the connection/disconnection recess and projection described in the specification. In response to this objection, a Replacement Sheet of drawings is being submitted as discussed above. As will be appreciated, reference numerals 108, 109 have been added to the originally-depicted recess and projection. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the objection is respectfully requested.

The specification was objected to under 35 U.S.C. §112, first paragraph, for allegedly being unclear. This objection is respectfully traversed. It is submitted that the specification clearly describes a connection/disconnection recess 108 or 208 and a

connection/disconnection projection 109 or 209 for connecting the individual units in Figures 1 and 2. Additional details of the connection/disconnection recess and projection are discussed in the specification on page 15, line 13, *et. seq.*, with respect to Figures 7A-7H. What is more, Claim 12 has been amended to even more clearly recite that the connection/disconnection section connects the units together in a cassette-like manner. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection to the specification is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-4, 6, 9, 10 and 12 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as allegedly being unclear. As will be appreciated, Claims 1, 2, 9 and 12 have been amended to more clearly recite Applicants' invention, taking into consideration the comments on pages 4 and 5 of the Office Action. It is submitted, therefore, that all of the claims are in full compliance with the particularity and distinctness requirements of the statute. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-3, 6, 9, 10 and 12 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as allegedly being anticipated by Caucal '332. In addition, Claim 4 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103 as allegedly being obvious over Caucal. These rejections are respectfully traversed.

Applicants' invention as set forth in Claim 1 relates to a liquid transfer apparatus for transferring a micro-volume of liquid, with the apparatus having a plurality of units. Each unit comprises a liquid containing section for containing liquid, a liquid introducing section for introducing liquid into the containing section, and a liquid leading out section for

leading out the liquid introduced into the liquid containing section. As claimed, the liquid introducing section of a first unit and the liquid leading out section of a second unit are connected, with each liquid leading out section having energy application means for applying energy for ejecting the liquid, and wherein each unit can be connected to and disconnected from the liquid transfer apparatus in a cassette-like manner.

Support for the claim amendments can be found, for example, on page 19, lines 7-18, of the specification. In accordance with Applicants' claimed invention, a high efficiency liquid transfer apparatus can be provided.

The Caucal patent relates to a large-scale plant that includes various storage vessels connected together and to a plurality of metering hoppers T1-T5. The storage vessels include a premixer 2, a homogenizing tank 1 and a buffer capacity 3. A liquid composition flows from the homogenizing tank to the buffer capacity and then to a coating unit 5.

In contrast to Applicants' claimed invention, however, Caucal does not teach or suggest, among other features, a liquid transfer apparatus that includes units that can be connected and disconnected in a cassette-like manner. In Caucal, the storage vessels are connected by conventional circuits, C1-C3. Accordingly, it is submitted that Caucal fails to anticipate or render obvious Applicants' invention as set forth in Claim 1. Therefore, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections of the claims under 35 U.S.C. §102 and §103 are respectfully requested.

Accordingly, it is submitted that Applicants' invention as set forth in independent Claim 1 is patentable over the cited art. In addition, dependent Claims 2-4, 6, 9, 10 and 12-14 set forth additional features of Applicants' invention. Independent consideration of the dependent claims is respectfully requested.



FOURTH SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

In compliance with the duty of disclosure under 37 C.F.R. § 1.56 and in accordance with the practice under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.97 and 1.98, the Examiner's attention is directed to the documents listed on the enclosed Form PTO-1449. Copies of the listed Japanese documents are also enclosed.

Accompanying this paper is a check for \$180.00 pursuant to 37 C.F.R. §1.97(c) and §1.17(p).

It is respectfully requested that the above information be considered by the Examiner and that an initialed copy of the enclosed Form PTO-1449 be returned indicating that such information has been considered.

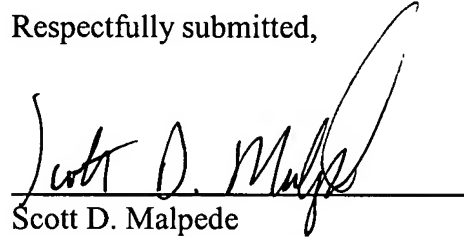
CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing, reconsideration and allowance of this application is deemed to be in order and such action is respectfully requested.

Appln. No.: 10/522,404

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our Washington, D.C. office by telephone at (202) 530-1010. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below-listed address.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Scott D. Malpede", is written over a horizontal line.

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